AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Claim 1 (original): A method for performing an Internet search launched from an instant messaging (IM) application, the method comprising:

providing a first IM user with an option to launch an Internet search of a second IM user directly from the IM application;

transmitting a search query identifying the second IM user to a search server;

searching the Internet for web pages matching the search query to generate search results using the search server;

accessing a user profile of the second IM user from an IM member profile database;

sorting the search results in order of relevance to information in the user profile of the second IM user; and

displaying the sorted search results to the first IM user.

Claim 2 (original): The method as defined in claim 1 further comprising: providing the first IM user with an option to launch an Internet search from the IM application based on a topic; and transmitting a second search query identifying the topic to the search server.

Claim 3 (original): The method as defined in claim 2 further comprising: searching the Internet for web pages matching the second search query to generate second search results using the search server; and displaying the second search results to the first IM user.

Claim 4 (original): The method as defined in claim 2 wherein displaying the search results further comprises displaying the user profile along with the search results.

Claim 5 (original): The method according to claim 2 wherein providing the first IM user with the option to launch the Internet search from the IM application based on the search query further comprises automatically displaying a string that identifies the second IM user in a dialog box.

Claim 6 (original): The method according to claim 5 wherein the string is a name that is accessed from an electronic address book.

Claim 7 (original): The method according to claim 5 wherein the string is a identification number that identifies the user profile.

Claim 8 (original): The method according to claim 1 wherein transmitting the search query to the search server further comprises transmitting a URL that contains an ID identifying the second IM user to the search server.

Claim 9 (original): The method according to claim 1 wherein providing the first IM user with the option to launch the Internet search from the IM application further comprises providing a search option on a tool bar or drop down list on a screen displayed by the IM application.

Claim 10 (original): The method according to claim 1 wherein the sorted search results are displayed in a web browser window generated by a web browser application.

Claim 11 (original): A computer system for performing an Internet search launched from an instant messaging (IM) application, the computer system comprising:

code for providing a first IM user with an option to launch an Internet search of a second IM user directly from the IM application;

code for transmitting a search query identifying the second IM user to a search server;

code for searching the Internet for web pages matching the search query to generate search results using the search server;

code for accessing a user profile of the second IM user from an IM member profile database;

code for sorting the search results in order of relevance to information in the user profile of the second IM user;

code for displaying the sorted search results to the first IM user; and a computer readable medium for storing the codes.

Claim 12 (original): The computer system according to claim 11 wherein the code for displaying the sorted search results further comprises displaying the user profile of the second IM user along with the search results.

Claim 13 (original): The computer system according to claim 12 further comprising: code for providing the first IM user with an option to launch an Internet search from the IM application based on a topic; and code for transmitting a second search query identifying the topic to the search server.

Claim 14 (original): The computer system according to claim 11 further comprising: code for searching the Internet for web pages matching the second search query to generate second search results using the search server; and code for displaying the second search results to the first IM user.

Claim 15 (original): The computer system according to claim 11 wherein the code for providing the first IM user with the option to launch the Internet search from the IM application based on the search query further comprises code for automatically displaying a string that identifies the second IM user in a dialog box.

Claim 16 (original): The computer system according to claim 15 wherein the string is a name that is accessed from an electronic address book.

Claim 17 (original): The computer system according to claim 15 the string is a identification number that identifies the user profile.

Claim 18 (original): The computer system according to claim 11 wherein the code for transmitting the search query to the search server further comprises code for transmitting a URL that contains an ID identifying the second IM user to the search server.

Claim 19 (original): The computer system according to claim 11 wherein the code for providing the first IM user with the option to launch the Internet search from the IM application further comprises code for providing a search option on a tool bar or drop down list on a screen displayed by the IM application.

Claim 20 (original): The computer system according to claim 11 wherein the sorted search results are displayed in a web browser window generated by a web browser application.

Claim 21 (new): Apparatus for performing an Internet search launched from an instant messaging (IM) application, the apparatus configured for:

receiving a request from a first IM user for an Internet search of a second IM user, the search request received via user input to the IM application;

causing a search of the Internet based on information associated with the second IM user;

sorting results of the search based on information in a user profile of the second IM user; and

communicating at least one of the sorted results of the search to the first IM user.